

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 SAL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 SS-15

STR-08 CEA-02 L-03 H-02 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-12 ABF-01

RSR-01 /168 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SEDSTATE WASHDC 8960

INFO AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 9540

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MA FR

SUBJ: FRANCO- MALAGASY RELATIONS

REF: PARIS 9348 B) PARIS 6746

1. SENIOR OFFICIAL ON FOCCART' S STAFF JOURNIAC PROVIDED EMBOFF AND VISITING AF/ C DIRECTOR COHEN ESSENTIALLY THE SAME PERSPECTIVE ON STATE OF PLAY FRANCO- MALAGASY NEGOTS AS THAT GIVEN BY QUAI OFFICIAL ON PREVIOUS DAY (REFTEL). EXPRESSING OPTIMISM ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR NEGOTS, JOURNIAC SAID THAT MALAGASY LEADERSHIP WAS PRAGMATIC AND WANTED TO FIND WAY TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING ISSUES. HE ALSO AGREED THAT GOM HAD DEMONSTRATED ITS ABILITY TO CONTAIN PROBLEMS BETWEEN COTIERS AND MERINAS AND OVERALL SITUATION SEEMED MANAGEABLE FOR TIME BEING.

2. ON DARKER SIDE JOURNIAC ADDED THAT PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS FOR FUTURE WERE ECONOMIC. HE CITED UNEMPLOYMENT, DECLINE IN PORDUCTION OF RICE AND MEAT, AND GENERAL PREDISPOSITION OF MALAGASY POPULATION TO SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR REVOLUTIONARY PROMISES OF RAMANANTSOA REGIME TO BE FULFILLED AS DIS-
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QUIETING SIGNS. UNLESS GOM TOOK STEPS TO REMEDY SITUATION, " ANYTHING MIGHT HAPPEN". UNFORTUNATELY, HE SAID, GOVT HAD NOT YET DECIDED HOW TO HANDLE MOUNTING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

3. COMMENT: EMPHASIS ON MALAGASY ECON PROBLEMS MAY IN PART REPRESENT ANXIETIES OF FRENCH BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN MADAGASCAR WITH WHICH FOCCART ORGANIZATION HAS CLOSE TIES, BUT IT PROBABLY ALSO REFLECTS GENUINE GOF CONCERN ABOUT IMPLICATIONS FOR LONGER TERM IN MADAGASCAR IF SOMETHING NOT DONE TO FACE UP TO FUNDAMENTAL ECONOMIC ISSUES.

4. OUTCOME OF FRANCO- MALAGASY NEGOTS COULD ALSO BE OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE FOR FUTURE OF SECRETARIAT GENERAL FOR AFRICAN, MALAGASY AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS. FOCCART'S ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY CRITICISED FOR ITS INEFFECTIVENESS OVER LAST YEAR, AS TRADITIONAL STRUCTURE OF FRANCE'S RELATIONS WITH ITS FORMER COLONIES HAS COME UNDER PRESSURE. IF NEGOTS WITH MADAGASCAR ARE SUCCESSFUL, FOCCART MAY WELL TRY TO TAKE SOME OF THE CREDIT (AS MAY ALSO COOPERATION SECRETARIAT- REF B) IN THIS REGARD IT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT TO NOTE THAT CONFIDENTIAL NEWSLETTER ECHO DE L' AFRIQUE IN ITS MAR 29 ISSUE CREDITS FOCCART WITH HAVING UNBLOCKED SITUATION THROUGH MEETING BETWEEN RATSIRAKA AND POMPIDOU. L' ECHO COMMENTS THAT THIS EFFORT DEMONSTRATES THAT SECRETARIAT GENERAL IS FAR FROM HAVING BECOME A " USELESS ORGANISM" (SIC). GDS
IRWIN

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